

# Jeremiah 36-39 • The Fall of Jerusalem

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier  
Calvary Chapel Ontario

Jeremiah chapter 36 begins with a dating of when this Word is given and it says, *“In the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD:” (ESV)* Let me stop you there, just to remind you that Jeremiah does not give his prophecies in chronological order, he goes backward and forward in time.

We've just gone backward in time, and so that you can maybe understand a little bit where we are in relationship to the end of the kingdom; the southern kingdom of Judah, I'll put on the screen here for you, once again, the last 4 kings of Judah.

## The last 4 kings of Judah:

- **Jehoahaz** (Josiah's #4) or Shallum; reigned 3 mo
- **Jehoiakim** (Josiah's #2) or Eliakim; reigned 11 yrs
- **Jehoiachin** (Josiah's grandson, son of #2) or Jeconiah or Coniah; reigned 3 mo
- **Zedekiah** (Josiah's #3) or Mattaniah; reigned 11 yrs

And they are, Jehoahaz, who was Josiah's fourth son, also known as Shallum. He only reigned for 3 months on the throne.

And then you've got Jehoiakim, alright, who is the king that we're talking about right now. He was Josiah's second born. So you can see that king Josiah, who died before this time, his sons did not take the throne in their birth order. You've got Jehoiakim now taking the throne, he was also known as Eliakim. I've told you guys before, they all have like 2 names, sometimes 3. It's worse than Lord of the Rings, and it's really tough to kind of, you know, stay on top of all that stuff.

But then, after Jehoiakim, you've got Jehoiachin, who was Josiah's grandson and the son of Jehoiakim. He was also known as Jeconiah, and sometimes, just called Coniah, and he reigned just three months.

And then remember we have the final last king of Judah, who was Zedekiah, and that was Josiah's third born son. He was also known as Mattaniah and he reigned for 11 years, right up to the fall of Jerusalem, when the Babylonian army invaded it and came against it, so forth. So this is all going on during Jehoiakim's reign, the fourth year of an 11 year reign, all right.

Here's the message, verse 2, *“Take a scroll and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel and Judah and all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah until today.”* Now you can kind of tell a little bit why this prophecy or why these words, this chapter, if you will, is out of chronological order. It's because Jeremiah is telling us, that it was at this point, during the reign of Jehoiakim, that the Lord spoke to him and said, I want you to write all these things down. From the very beginning of when I started giving you prophetic words to the present day, I want you to make a record of these things. So, I'm glad the Lord did too because it's why we're reading these things today.

Verse 3, He goes on and He says, *“It may be (this is the Lord speaking to Jeremiah. It may be) that the house of Judah will hear all the disaster that I intend to do to them, so that every one may turn from his evil way, and that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.”* So God says, I want you to write these things down, because somebody might get a hold of this and read it, and repent, and I can hold back the judgment that I've been talking about that's coming their way.

So in verse 4 it says, *“Then Jeremiah called Baruch (and you'll remember we talked about Baruch before. He was the scribe whom Jeremiah dictated the messages to. So he called Baruch) the son of Neriah, and Baruch wrote on a scroll at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD that he had spoken to him. <sup>5</sup> And Jeremiah ordered Baruch, saying, “I am banned from going to the house of the LORD, (that means the temple) <sup>6</sup> so you are to go, and on a day of fasting in the hearing of all the people in the LORD's house you shall read the words of the LORD from the scroll that you have written at my dictation. You shall read them also in the hearing of all the men of Judah who come out of their cities.””* So you can tell a couple of things about these verses.

First of all, Jeremiah is already in hot water with the leadership and he's been banned from even going into the temple precincts because of the messages that God has been giving him, that God is bringing judgment against Judah. People consider that to be treason for Jeremiah to give a word of the Lord, like judgment is coming and the Babylonians are going to conquer us. But that was, right, it was from the Lord, but he got in trouble. Isn't that crazy? You do what

the Lord tells you to do, you get in trouble. Hey, it happens, so that's what's going on.

So what does he do? He tells Baruch write this, or take down all this stuff that you've been receiving by dictation and read it for them in their hearing. He goes on to say in verse 7, *“It may be that their plea for mercy will come before the LORD, and that every one will turn from his evil way, for great is the anger and wrath that the LORD has pronounced against this people.”*<sup>8</sup> *And Baruch the son of Neriah did all that Jeremiah the prophet ordered him about reading from the scroll the words of the LORD in the LORD's house.”*

Now we're told, *“<sup>9</sup> In the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, all the people in Jerusalem and all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem proclaimed a fast before the LORD.”* We don't know why this fast was proclaimed, it was probably because they felt threatened, but we don't know exactly why. We're assuming it was because of some kind of an emergency.

*“<sup>10</sup> Then, in the hearing of all the people, Baruch read the words of Jeremiah from the scroll, in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the secretary, which was in the upper court, at the entry of the New Gate of the LORD's house. <sup>11</sup> When Micaiah the son of Gemariah, son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the LORD from the scroll, <sup>12</sup> he went down to the king's house, into the secretary's chamber, and all the officials were sitting there: Elishama the secretary, Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, Elnathan the son of Achbor, Gemariah the son of Shaphan, Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the officials. <sup>13</sup> And Micaiah told them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the scroll in the hearing of the people.*

*<sup>14</sup> Then all the officials sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, son of Shelemiah, (how am I doing on those?) son of Cush, to say to Baruch, “Take in your hand the scroll that you read in the hearing of the people, and come.” So Baruch the son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and came to them. (these are all the officials) <sup>15</sup> And they said to him, “Sit down and read it.” So Baruch read it to them. <sup>16</sup> When they heard all the words, they turned one to another in fear. And they said to Baruch, “We must report all these words to the king.””* So these people are responding the way you're supposed to respond. These people are responding in fear to the message that Jeremiah has been given from the Lord.

*“<sup>17</sup> Then they asked Baruch, “Tell us, please, how did you write all these words? Was it at his dictation?” <sup>18</sup> Baruch answered them, “He dictated all these words to me, while I wrote them with ink on the scroll.” <sup>19</sup> Then the*

officials said to Baruch, “Go and hide, you and Jeremiah, and let no one know where you are.”” Why is that being said? Well, they know. Even though they are responding properly to these prophetic words, they know that this is a treasonous thing in the minds of some to prophesy against the king and against the city. And so they know that Jeremiah and Baruch could be in danger because of it, so they tell him to go and hide along with Jeremiah the prophet and so forth.

*“<sup>20</sup> So they went into the court to the king, having put the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the secretary, and they reported all the words to the king. <sup>21</sup> Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and he took it from the chamber of Elishama the secretary. And Jehudi read it to the king and all the officials who stood beside the king. <sup>22</sup> It was the ninth month, and the king was sitting in the winter house, and there was a fire burning in the fire pot before him. <sup>23</sup> As Jehudi read three or four columns, the king would cut them off with a knife and throw them into the fire in the fire pot, until the entire scroll was consumed in the fire that was in the fire pot.*

*<sup>24</sup> Yet neither the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words was afraid, nor did they tear their garments. <sup>25</sup> Even when Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. <sup>26</sup> And the king commanded Jerahmeel the king's son and Seraiah the son of Azriel and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel to seize Baruch the secretary and Jeremiah the prophet, but the LORD hid them.*

*<sup>27</sup> Now after the king had burned the scroll with the words that Baruch wrote at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: <sup>28</sup> “Take another scroll and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned. <sup>29</sup> And concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah you shall say, ‘Thus says the LORD, You have burned this scroll, saying, “Why have you written in it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and will cut off from it man and beast?”’*

*<sup>30</sup> Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: He shall have none to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat by day and the frost by night. <sup>31</sup> And I will punish him and his offspring and his servants for their iniquity. I will bring upon them and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and upon the people of Judah all the disaster that I have pronounced against them, but they would not hear.’”*

*“<sup>32</sup> Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the*

*scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And many similar words were added to them.*” So, this really kind of tells you where the kings of Judah were at, as it relates to the word of the Lord and the prophecy that God had given to Jeremiah that the king of Babylon was going to come, he was going to conquer the city of Jerusalem and basically take over.

But you can see the different responses, can't you, to the Word of God. These kind of middle level officials, heard the words of the prophecy and they responded with fear and they said we've got to take this to the king. And so they gave it to his other higher officials who then brought it before the king, who read it in the king's presence, but you heard what happened. The king would cut off each part that had been read and toss it into the fire, showing absolutely no respect, no fear, no honor for the Word of the Lord.

Do you guys remember back when we were going through the Book of Isaiah? How the Lord spoke about those who respond to His word in the way that we saw these kind of middle level leaders respond. Let me put it on the screen to remind you here, it went like this, the Lord said,

**Isaiah 66:2 (ESV)**

*... this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.*

That is the heart that the Lord is looking for out of us. People who recognize, this is not, these are not the words of men, this is the Word of God. And when we hear the Word of God spoken, it should cause us to have a reverence and respect for what is being said rather than to just toss it aside.

Jeremiah chapter 37. Now we're going to go forward in time once again to the final reign of Zedekiah. It says, *“Zedekiah the son of Josiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah, reigned instead of Coniah (or Jeconiah, who we also know as Jehoiachin) the son of Jehoiakim.”*

So, even Zedekiah was placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, he wasn't put there by the people. He was essentially what we call a vassal king and that is a term that describes someone whose kingship is under the rule of another foreign army. And he is basically put in place to do 2 things; obey the king who is, really, who's in authority and to pay tribute, which is tax, that's really all the king was meant to do. But Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon and decided that he didn't want to serve the king of Babylon, he wanted to be a true king of Judah and you know his heart.

Verse 2, it says, *“But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land listened to the words of the LORD that he spoke through Jeremiah the prophet. <sup>3</sup> King Zedekiah sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the priest, the son of Maaseiah, to Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “Please pray for us to the LORD our God.””* Now, this is really interesting, isn't it? Because things are heating up, the king wants Jeremiah to pray on their behalf.

And this often happens, you know, when we find this even happening here in the United States of America. It was crazy, you know, back in 9/11, you know, when airplanes, jets, you know, flew into the twin towers in New York, suddenly, everybody's talking about prayer and prayer was popular. And the president was praying, and senators were praying, and people were calling on the people of the United States to pray for the families who lost loved ones, to pray for the devastation and the damage. Suddenly we were just, we were all praying, we were a praying nation.

It didn't change the way we lived, but it, we started talking about prayer and that's what's going on here in Judah. Zedekiah is sending word to Jeremiah to pray. He's not planning on changing his life, he just wants to get out of the pickle that he's in. He knows that he's in a tough spot and he wants it to go away. And often that's what people are really doing when they ask for prayer. They simply want their circumstances to change, they don't really change their life. They don't want to, they don't want to live for the Lord, they don't want to do things right, they just want things to be better.

Now we're told here in verse 4 that, *“Now Jeremiah was still going in and out among the people, for he had not yet been put in prison.”* So he was still free to come and go as he wished. Verse 5 tells us, here's what's going on. *“The army of Pharaoh had come out of Egypt. And when the Chaldeans (and that's another name for the Babylonians) who were besieging Jerusalem heard news about them, they withdrew from Jerusalem.”* Do you guys remember we talked about this last week?

There was a story that was given to us in the chapters we dealt with last week where the Babylonians were besieging the city and so the people decided to repent of one thing and that was keeping their male and female slaves. And they let them all go free because the Lord wanted them to let them go free and they knew that. But then what happened? So here's the Babylonians all around their city, besieging the city. But they get wind of the fact that Pharaoh is marching against the Babylonian army that's now besieging Jerusalem. So the Babylonians left their siege and they went to go confront the Egyptian army.

Well, all the people of Israel really knew at that point was the Babylonians went away.

Then they come to find out, oh, they went to go fight against the Egyptians. Well, maybe the Egyptians are going to overpower the Babylonians and we're going to be okay. So they went back to their old ways. They went and grabbed their male and female slaves that they had set free and they re-enslaved them. We read about that last week. This is talking about that same time period where the Babylonian army withdrew from the city.

Verse 6, *“Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet: <sup>7</sup> “Thus says the LORD, God of Israel: Thus shall you say to the king of Judah who sent you to me to inquire of me, ‘Behold, (here’s the message) Pharaoh’s army that came to help you is about to return to Egypt, to its own land. <sup>8</sup> And the Chaldeans (meaning again, the Babylonians) shall come back and fight against this city. They shall capture it and burn it with fire.*

<sup>9</sup> Thus says the LORD, Do not deceive yourselves, saying, “The Chaldeans will surely go away from us,” for they will not go away. <sup>10</sup> For even if you should defeat the whole army of Chaldeans who are fighting against you, and there remained of them only wounded men, every man in his tent, they would rise up and burn this city with fire.” This is the Lord speaking and this is a pretty amazing message.

He says, even if the Egyptians weaken their army, and then you end up fighting against the Babylonian army, and even if you defeat them and send them wounded back to their tents, they're still going to burn this place down to the ground. Because I'm behind it's my hand and it is going to happen.

Verse 11 says, *“Now when the Chaldean army had withdrawn from Jerusalem at the approach of Pharaoh’s army, <sup>12</sup> Jeremiah set out from Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin to receive his portion there among the people.”* Do you guys remember last study? We learned that there was land actually being bought and sold. So he's going to go back to his area of Benjamin and it says that, *“<sup>13</sup> When he was at the Benjamin Gate, (he’s just leaving the city of Jerusalem) a sentry there named Irijah the son of Shelemiah, son of Hananiah, seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “You are deserting to the Chaldeans.””* So they're catching him on his way out of the city and this sentry charges him with treason and going to the enemy.

Verse 14, *“And Jeremiah said, “It is a lie; I am not deserting to the Chaldeans.” But Irijah would not listen to him, and seized Jeremiah and*

brought him to the officials. <sup>15</sup> And the officials were enraged at Jeremiah, and they beat him and imprisoned him in the house of Jonathan the secretary, for it had been made a prison.

<sup>16</sup> When Jeremiah had come to the dungeon cells and remained there many days, <sup>17</sup> King Zedekiah sent for him and received him. The king questioned him secretly in his house and said, “Is there any word from the Lord?” Jeremiah said, “There is.” Then he said, “You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.”” Well, you can't give this guy any good news at all.

<sup>18</sup> Jeremiah also said to King Zedekiah, “What wrong have I done to you or your servants or this people, that you have put me in prison? <sup>19</sup> Where are your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, ‘The king of Babylon will not come against you and against this land’? <sup>20</sup> Now hear, please, O my lord the king: let my humble plea come before you and do not send me back to the house of Jonathan the secretary, lest I die there.”

<sup>21</sup> So King Zedekiah gave orders, and they committed Jeremiah to the court of the guard. And a loaf of bread was given him daily from the bakers' street, until all the bread of the city was gone. So Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.” So Zedekiah didn't set him free, he simply put him into a different holding area, one that was a little more humane and where he wouldn't starve to death because of it.

Jeremiah chapter 38, it says, “Now Shephatiah the son of Mattan, Gedaliah the son of Pashhur, Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur the son of Malchiah heard the words that Jeremiah was saying to all the people: <sup>2</sup> “Thus says the LORD: He who stays in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, but he who goes out to the Chaldeans shall live. He shall have his life as a prize of war, and live. <sup>3</sup> Thus says the LORD: This city shall surely be given into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon and be taken.”

<sup>4</sup> Then the officials said to the king, “Let this man be put to death, for he is weakening the hands of the soldiers who are left in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man is not seeking the welfare of this people, but their harm.” <sup>5</sup> King Zedekiah said, “Behold, he is in your hands, for the king can do nothing against you.”” I want you to stop there for a moment because that gives us a good snapshot of Zedekiah. He was a very weak man, really. I mean, he was strong in the area of rebellious stupidity, but he was a very weak man when it came to being a leader.



And so, these officials, I mean, he knows what Jeremiah's been saying all along. And so these officials come to him and they say, Jeremiah's been saying this and this and this and this, he needs to die. And Zedekiah's like, well, I couldn't stop you even if I tried, that's essentially what he's saying.

*“<sup>6</sup> So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchiah, the king's son, which was in the court of the guard, letting Jeremiah down by ropes. And there was no water in the cistern, but only mud, and Jeremiah sank in the mud.”* And of course their purpose was to put him in there and just let him die. Don't feed him, don't take care of him, just let him die.

*“<sup>7</sup> When (and here's an interesting name that you're going to hear a little bit later. When) Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern—(and we're told here that) the king was sitting in the Benjamin Gate—<sup>8</sup> Ebed-melech went from the king's house and said to the king, <sup>9</sup> “My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they did to Jeremiah the prophet by casting him into the cistern, and he will die there of hunger, for there is no bread left in the city.”*

*<sup>10</sup> Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, “Take thirty men with you from here, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before he dies.”*” What does that tell you again about Zedekiah? Whoever's talking to him, he'll just do whatever they want. Somebody comes and says, he needs to die, oh, yeah, you're right, you go ahead. Oh, no, no, we need to save Jeremiah, okay, you go take some guys and save him. The guy is just a total weenie, I mean, he's just, nothing to him from the standpoint of any kind of leadership strength or purpose. He's just, he's like a, you know, the waves in the wind.

*“<sup>11</sup> So Ebed-melech took the men with him and went to the house of the king, to a wardrobe in the storehouse, and took from there old rags and worn-out clothes, which he let down to Jeremiah in the cistern by ropes. <sup>12</sup> Then Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, “Put the rags and clothes between your armpits and the ropes.” Jeremiah did so. <sup>13</sup> Then they drew Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.”* Again, he's not set free, he's still now just in the court of the guard, which is much more humane.

*<sup>14</sup> King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah the prophet and received him at the third entrance of the temple of the LORD. The king said to Jeremiah, “I will ask you a question; hide nothing from me.” <sup>15</sup> Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “If I tell you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you counsel, you will not listen to me.” <sup>16</sup> Then King Zedekiah swore secretly to Jeremiah, (notice that) “As*

*the LORD lives, who made our souls, I will not put you to death or deliver you into the hand of these men who seek your life.”*

*<sup>17</sup> Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “Thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: If you will surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, then your life shall be spared, and this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live. <sup>18</sup> But if you do not surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, then this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and you shall not escape from their hand.”” I want you to hear Zedekiah’s response.*

*“<sup>19</sup> King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “I am afraid of the Judeans who have deserted to the Chaldeans, lest I be handed over to them and they deal cruelly with me.” <sup>20</sup> Jeremiah said, “You shall not be given to them. Obey now the voice of the LORD in what I say to you, and it shall be well with you, and your life shall be spared. <sup>21</sup> But if you refuse to surrender, this is the vision which the LORD has shown to me: <sup>22</sup> Behold, all the women left in the house of the king of Judah were being led out to the officials of the king of Babylon and were saying, “Your trusted friends have deceived you and prevailed against you; now that your feet are sunk in the mud, they turn away from you.’*

*<sup>23</sup> All your wives and your sons shall be led out to the Chaldeans, and you yourself shall not escape from their hand, but shall be seized by the king of Babylon, and this city shall be burned with fire.” <sup>24</sup> Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “Let no one know of these words, and you shall not die. <sup>25</sup> If the officials hear that I have spoken with you and come to you and say to you, ‘Tell us what you said to the king and what the king said to you; hide nothing from us and we will not put you to death,’*

*<sup>26</sup> then you shall say to them, ‘I made a humble plea to the king that he would not send me back to the house of Jonathan to die there.’” <sup>27</sup> Then all the officials came to Jeremiah and asked him, and he answered them as the king had instructed him. So they stopped speaking with him, for the conversation had not been overheard. <sup>28</sup> And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard until the day that Jerusalem was taken.”*

So again, you see the character of king Zedekiah. He calls for Jeremiah, he says to him, give me the word of the Lord and Jeremiah says, why? If I give it to you, you're just going to kill me and even if I tell you, you're not going to receive it anyway. Zedekiah says, I promise, I won't kill you, I won't put you to death. And even when the Lord tells Zedekiah, if you surrender, your life will be spared. But he objects and says, there are some men from Judah who have

already gone to the king of Babylon and if I surrender to the king of Babylon, I'm afraid that those men are going to abuse me and kill me. And Jeremiah promises him from the Lord, you will not be harmed. But all Zedekiah can say to him is, don't tell anyone about this conversation. If they ask you what we talked about, tell them it was about something else.

So again, you see the man Zedekiah, he's a fearful man, he's afraid. And whenever it comes up to the issue of obeying the Lord, it's always but, but what about, but what about, but what about, well, then what am I going to do? You know. We hear that from believers today too. When we're facing a difficult act of obedience, something that the Lord, they know the Lord wants them to do. But if they do it, they're afraid of the fallout. But if I do that, or, but if we do this.

You know, I was talking to a guy, I wasn't talking face to face, we were talking through email, but, I got to be careful how I say this. Can I just tell you that there are times when the government has actually made it difficult for people to get married, because they penalize people. You know, you may have a couple and they're each receiving some kind of government benefits, but if they get married, they lose their benefits.

And so, the government actually makes it hard for them to be obedient to the Lord from the standpoint that, you know, they become penalized by the government if they do that and it's a very common tale. And so, believe it or not, there's a lot of people who are living together, apart from marriage, not because they don't really want to be married, but because of the penalties that would ...And so they're afraid, it's really kind of a similar...

And I've had people write to me, and I had a, recently had a guy write to me, you know, pastor Paul, you know, I've been living with this woman for 11 years or something like that, and you know, I want to marry the woman, but if I do, we're going to lose our retirement benefits and this and that and all this other stuff, you know, so we just continue to live like this.

And so fear becomes the predominant emotion, you know, that guides or dictates their actions. What people forget, and I'm, this is a little side message, okay, so. What people forget, is you can get married without a marriage license. You can be married in the eyes of the Lord. Do you know that people actually got married before they actually issued marriage licenses and they were just as married as anybody else? My great grandfather was a traveling pastor and people used to come to his home at night and knock on the door and want to be married and he'd marry them. He'd get up in the middle of the night and get his

wife out there and he'd marry them. And he'd do it and there was no certificate, there was no license.

Do you think people weren't truly married back in the days of Israel when they got married? But well, they didn't get a license from the United States, so I guess they're not really married. Do you guys understand that a license doesn't make you married? It simply is a way for the state to recognize your marriage for legal reasons. We've said way too long in this country, by the authority vested in me, by the state of da da da da, I pronounce you husband and wife.

I stopped saying that at some point, because I suddenly realized, what a dumb thing to say, the state doesn't marry anybody. God recognizes marriages and the state recognizes what God has done and then they extend to them certain legalities and rights based on that. But you see, when we start believing that the state marries people, we start believing the state divorces people too, and they don't do that either. You can go to the state and you can get a divorce, that doesn't mean you're divorced in God's eyes, right?

If I just decide I don't like my wife anymore, I'm going to divorce her, that doesn't mean I'm divorced in God's eyes. God has given very specific guidelines for what would quantify or validate, you know, a divorce. Which is always a tragedy, but it's not because a license has been revoked, for heaven's sakes. You know, in other words, God doesn't do what the government says, just because the government says it.

It's just crazy, we've just, we've gotten so far away from just obeying God's Word, you know. God created marriage and the state has nothing to say about that one way or the other. They can recognize what God has done but they don't make you married, they don't make you divorced, that's all up to God, that's all up to Him.

So anyway, fear, but you know, because we've been whacked out and we've got all these things misshapen in our minds and we think that somehow God cowers to the state or... So we got the we got Christians who are out there living, you know, outside of marriage, because they're afraid, they're fearful just like Zedekiah was. Yeah I had a brother in the Lord who was a pastor and he had this couple in his church and they were, they weren't illegal aliens, but they were foreigners here in the United States and they couldn't get their papers worked out in such a way that the state, the federal government wouldn't recognize their citizenship to the point where they could get married, you know. They just couldn't, they couldn't get a marriage license.

And so they were, you know, they'd been living together, had children together, came to the Lord together and now wanted to get married to honor the Lord. But the federal government wouldn't give them a marriage license, state wouldn't give them a marriage license and so they were going to church and they felt like second class citizens.

And this pastor came to me and said, "this poor couple, they just, they feel terrible, they feel like they're just, outed, you know." I said, "well, marry them, just marry them, do a marriage ceremony, get them married, you know. It's the Lord who recognizes marriages," you know. So I said, "don't wait, do it now, they don't need to act and feel like second class citizens in the kingdom of God." Anyway, okay, I'm off my soapbox now, back down.

Jeremiah chapter 39, here we go. *"In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and besieged it. <sup>2</sup> In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, a breach was made in the city."* And we might even say, finally made in the city, because that's quite a period of time that they've been besieging the city.

*"<sup>3</sup> Then all the officials of the king of Babylon came and sat in the middle gate: Nergal-sar-ezer of Samgar, Nebu-sar-sekim the Rab-saris, Nergal-sar-ezer the Rab-mag, with all the rest of the officers of the king of Babylon. <sup>4</sup> When Zedekiah king of Judah and all the soldiers saw them, (what do you suppose they did?) they fled, going out of the city at night by way of the king's garden through the gate between the two walls; and they went toward the Arabah."* So Zedekiah is running for his life, when the chips are down, he abandons the ship.

*"<sup>5</sup> But the army of the Chaldeans pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. And when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, at Riblah, in the land of Hamath; and he passed sentence on him." (check this out now) <sup>6</sup> The king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah at Riblah before his eyes, and the king of Babylon slaughtered all the nobles of Judah. <sup>7</sup> He put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him in chains to take him to Babylon."* So the very last thing that Zedekiah saw was the death of his sons and his nobles, and after that he saw nothing else because his eyes were put out.

*"<sup>8</sup> The Chaldeans burned the king's house and the house of the people, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. <sup>9</sup> Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, carried into exile to Babylon the rest of the people who were left in the city, those who had deserted to him, and the people who remained."*

<sup>10</sup> *Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, left in the land of Judah some of the poor people who owned nothing, (why? Because these people were less likely to mount any kind of a rebellion against the king) and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.* <sup>11</sup> *Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave command concerning Jeremiah through Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, saying,* <sup>12</sup> *“Take him, look after him well, and do him no harm, but deal with him as he tells you.”*” Isn't that fascinating? The king himself gave command to his commander to treat Jeremiah well.

<sup>13</sup> *So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, Nebushazban (and then all those other guys) the Rab-saris, Nergal-sar-ezer the Rab-mag, and all the chief officers of the king of Babylon* <sup>14</sup> *sent and took Jeremiah from the court of the guard. They entrusted him to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, that he should take him home. So he lived among the people.”*

By the way, Gedaliah became the governor of this, the land of Judah during that early period of the exile. Gedaliah was a godly man, we're going to read more about him as we go on. He was ultimately assassinated, but he was a good man and he was the first governor. And from this point on, they will only have governors or they later, on during the time of Jesus, and before they will have some kings appointed by Rome, but they will not have a Jewish king and have not had a Jewish king until, of course, Jesus returns.

Verse 15, and we end out the chapter this way. It says, *“The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah while he was shut up in the court of the guard:* <sup>16</sup> *“Go, and say to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, (remember that guy, the eunuch? He's the one who gave word to the king to rescue Jeremiah from the cistern) ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will fulfill my words against this city for harm and not for good, and they shall be accomplished before you on that day.*

<sup>17</sup> *But I will deliver you on that day, declares the LORD, and you shall not be given into the hand of the men of whom you are afraid.* <sup>18</sup> *For I will surely save you, and you shall not fall by the sword, but you shall have your life as a prize of war, because you have put your trust in me, declares the LORD.’”* I love that, I love that, and I'll tell you why. That's the heart of God toward His people. That is the heart of God toward those who trust Him.

Now there, we only have a few words here. A few prophecies that are given to some of the faithful people who lived in the region of Judah. But you've got to know there were many of them, there were many faithful people. And I believe that God spared every one of them. I don't believe any of those people who were

trusting in the Lord with all of their hearts were dealing with the wrath of God for the city. Now we know that some of the faithful people were taken to the Persian kingdom where they played some very important roles there, we know that.

And we know that Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Esther, Mordecai, we know that there were people, godly people who were taken there, but whom God prospered and blessed even while they were there.

So the point is, this is God's heart. God says that, because you've put your trust in me, you'll have your life and you know, isn't that the Gospel? Isn't that the Gospel? Because you've put your trust in me, you'll have your life, you've got your life. You, you know, it's just given in different words in the New Testament; that whosoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16) Because we're trusting in Him, we've put our faith in Him. So that's where we're going to stop for tonight, we're going to pick it up in the 40th chapter of Jeremiah next time, so let's pray.

Father, I thank you so much for just the ministry of your Word tonight and the wonderful truths and reminders that we get from this. Lord, we see the character of so many people. This Ethiopian who risked his own reputation to spare Jeremiah, these officials of the king who feared God and feared your Word and then there were other higher officials of the king who did not fear the Word of the Lord.

We know that Zedekiah was a man who was a very weak ruler, a very weak man, tossed and turned by the opinions and comments of others. Lord, save us from that sort of a character, make us people, Lord, who tremble at your Word. Make us people, Lord, who when we say yes, the answer is yes and when we say no, the answer is no. And who stand on the promises of God, even when there might be some fallout because of it.

Help us to be people of character, people who honor your Word and your presence. Thank you, Lord, for these chapters in Jeremiah. Thank you for teaching us tonight. Continue to speak to us, Lord, through your Spirit. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and King, amen.